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Afghanistan: Four Years of Occupation

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Following is a paper prepared by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in December 1983. It is a sequel to Special Report No. 106, "Afghanistan: Three Years of Occupation."

Overview

Four years after Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan, neither a political nor a military solution seems likely in the near future. The Afghan resistance shows no sign of weakening or loss of popular support. The country-wide insurgency continues and the mujahideen deny the Soviets military success.

During 1983 resistance operations against Soviet/regime forces have become more effective even in urban areas. Tactical cooperation has increased among resistance groups and most of the country's land area remains under resistance control. Typically, once Soviet/regime sweep operations have been completed, areas return to mujahideen control. Major problems of supply and disarmament remain, however, and resistance forces are unlikely to be able militarily to eject the Soviets from Afghanistan.

Despite some optimism following the April round of indirect negotiations in Geneva that the parties might be able to work out a settlement, the UN-sponsored negotiations among the concerned parties have thus far not made significant progress because of Moscow's unwillingness to set a timetable for the withdrawal of its forces. The Soviet Union appears committed to a strategy of attempting to wear down the resistance militarily, gaining control of urban areas, and remodeling the Afghan

political and social structure in its own image. Soviet troop strength remains at approximately 106,000.

Afghanistan's internal problems have multiplied as the regime remains factionally divided and as Soviet control deepens. During 1983 economic and administrative chaos increased. The war has severely damaged Afghanistan's social and economic infrastructure, causing major declines in social services, agricultural production, and industrial output. Afghanistan is becoming more dependent upon outside food sources, and its economy is more dependent upon Soviet aid.

Significant declines in security in both urban and rural areas have led to increased Soviet use of KHAD—Khademani-Eshraf-e-Delet, the Afghan intelligence and security organization. KHAD is being greatly expanded but has been ineffective in promoting loyalty to the regime.

Intense Soviet efforts to fashion the Afghan military into an effective force also have failed and the people are increasingly alienated by forced conscription drives. Soviet frustration over inability to stop resistance activities has led in recent months to a deliberate policy of increased brutality and reprisals against the civilian population.

The refugee problem continues to grow. Between one-fifth and one-fourth of Afghanistan's pre-1979 population now lives outside its borders, mainly in Pakistan and Iran. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Program (WFP), and a variety of voluntary agencies and governments, including the United

States, assist Pakistan in caring for these refugees—the vast majority of whom are determined to return to their homeland when it is freed from foreign occupation.

U.S. policy goals for Afghanistan remain the same. We seek the earliest possible negotiated political settlement in Afghanistan to effect the withdrawal of Soviet forces and end the agony of the Afghan people. Such a settlement must also provide for the other three requirements spelled out in five UN resolutions on Afghanistan: the independence and territorial status of Afghanistan, self-determination of the Afghan people, and the return of the refugees with safety and honor. The United States supports the UN negotiating efforts to achieve these goals.

The Soviet Occupation

In 1983 the military struggle for Afghanistan continued unabated. As before, the Soviets concentrated on building up key logistical bases, securing Kabul and other major cities, improving security for lines of communication, and controlling infiltration routes across the Pakistani and Iranian borders. During the year, no major changes occurred in the size or composition of Soviet forces committed to Afghanistan. The total number remains at about 106,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan with some 30,000 additional men on the Soviet side of the border.

Throughout 1983 Soviet/Afghan forces regularly conducted subbattalion operations designed to interrupt resistance supply lines and respond to

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reports of successful military operations, but these efforts have not signaled a decline of Soviet-backed activities. The resistance has been remarkably resilient and the mujahideen today are stronger and better equipped than ever before. They have an extensive intelligence capability and regularly learn in advance about Soviet/Afghan operations from sympathizers in the Afghan military.

Large areas of the country remain under resistance control, and even in principal cities Soviet/Afghan control is being increasingly challenged. Throughout the year the resistance has dramatically demonstrated its ability to extend the war into the capital by regularly conducting operations inside Kabul and its suburbs. During the winter months, Kabul's electricity supply was a prime target of the mujahideen. Power cuts lasting several days were caused by destruction of the power lines leading from power stations outside Kabul, confronting the capital with an energy crisis unprecedented in the 4 years of Soviet occupation. Frequently, only the Pule Charki thermal power station located on the outskirts of Kabul could be relied upon, but its capacity was limited due to repeated interdiction of fuel supplies from Termez on the Afghan/Soviet border. A key petroleum pipeline which services Kabul and the major Soviet airbase at Bagram, 30 km north of Kabul, has been sabotaged so often that it is no longer dependable as a regular source of fuel.

During the summer, Marshal S. L. Sokolov, the Soviet first deputy defense minister, returned to Afghanistan for another inspection tour. Following his previous visit in late 1981, the Soviets significantly stepped up their military operations and increased their troop strength. While there has been no discernible increase of troops or step-up in operations this year, Sokolov's latest visit clearly reflected the Soviet leadership's concern about the progress of the war. The upsurge in reprisals against civilians also appears to reflect growing frustration over failure to stem the resistance.

During the summer, the level of fighting in Kabul was also significantly higher than last year. In mid-June, a few days before resumption of the UN-sponsored indirect negotiations, the mujahideen staged a night-long attack against the Soviet-manned Bala Hissar fortress and attacked a Soviet command post near the Darulaman Palace. The attacks resumed in early July with a successful rocket attack on Kabul airport that damaged military and civilian aircraft.

On the night of August 13-14, the mujahideen staged the most ambitious operation in the capital since the Soviet invasion. Using coordinated rocket, mor-

tar, and small arms fire, they attacked Radua Afghanistan, a Soviet residential complex in the Bala Hissar fortress. On October 1, the mujahideen brought the Soviet Embassy in Kabul under attack for several hours. These incidents involving some of the most heavily guarded and important installations in the city, along with bombings and frequent assassinations of regime officials, undermine the tenuous government control in Kabul.

In a move to demonstrate the regime's control of the capital, on September 28 Rahbar Karmal conducted a highly publicized walking tour of Kabul. That he felt compelled to undertake such a step and the elaborate security precautions necessary to carry it out, only served to further highlight the strength of the resistance.

Large sections of the cities of Kandahar, Mazar-e Sharif, and Herat likewise remain in the hands of the resistance. Movement of regime personnel into many areas of these cities is possible only with substantial military support and during daylight hours. In April, in response to mujahideen attacks, the Soviets conducted heavy bombing and shelling of the western suburbs of Herat. As many as 50 planes a day flew missions over the city, causing extensive damage and resulting in thousands of civilian casualties. The savage bombing of Herat and the surrounding villages, however, brought no improvement in the government's security situation. Even daylight resistance operations in Herat are not uncommon, and fighting in and around the city takes place every night.

Throughout the year, Soviet/Afghan forces also have been repeatedly attacked in and around Kandahar, the country's second largest city. An incident in late August vividly demonstrated the regime's limited control. The day following a regime speech proclaiming that the power of the "counter-revolutionaries" had been broken in that city, mujahideen from Kandahar and the countryside appeared on rooftops around government installations in the city center and at many military posts surrounding the city. For several hours they taunted regime soldiers through loud speakers and exhorted them to defect.

In recent months, even in Jalalabad, which has been one of the most secure cities in Afghanistan, the situation has eroded with frequent attacks on the airfield. Similarly, the regime forces resistance in northern Afghanistan. Mazar-e Sharif has been subjected to repeated mujahideen attacks. In September, an attack against the airfield outside the city caused extensive damage.

In late April and early May, following a deterioration of security in Paktia and Paktika Provinces, which had already supply lines from Pakistan, a major Soviet/Afghan offensive was launched. The operation, involving some 10,000 government forces, was designed to relieve pressure on several Afghan cantonments that were under mujahideen pressure and could be resupplied only by air. A Soviet-trained elite Afghan unit, the 38th Commando Brigade, was decimated near the town of Urgun. This battalion was wiped out, and the remainder of the unit deserted to the resistance. This defeat represented a major setback to Soviet efforts to reconstruct the Afghan army.

In late summer, the mujahideen again stepped up pressure in Paktia and Paktika Provinces. During August and September many isolated government outposts in these provinces deserted or were overrun. Major cantonments at Urgun, Khowni, and Jay Maidan were brought under siege. Although no important towns fell to the mujahideen during the September attacks, the fighting highlighted the growing strength of the resistance in this region and reflected in increasing tactical coordination among mujahideen battalions in Afghanistan.

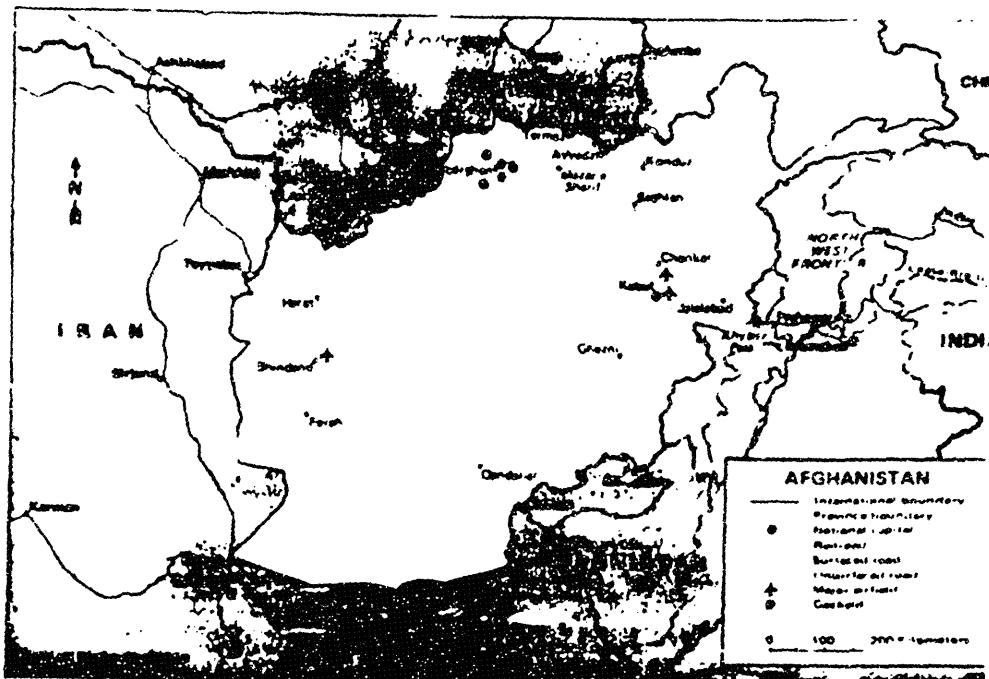
This past year has been marked by increased mujahideen success in convoy interdiction. Resistance efforts in Paktia and Paktika Provinces were significantly boosted by the interdiction of Soviet and regime resupply convoys traveling through the Lower Valley. Although additional government military posts have been set up along the major highways to protect the convoys, the mujahideen have proven increasingly skilled in the use of mines and in preventing convoy movement. The road through the Lower Valley—which begins just south of Kabul and is the primary land route from Kabul to Paktia and Paktika Provinces—has been a particular problem for the Soviets. Soviet/Afghan convoys were repeatedly ambushed with heavy losses, often forcing the convoys to return to Kabul. Security in the Shomali region south of the Salang Tunnel on the road to Kabul also has posed a major problem for the Soviets. Traffic through this area, the principal line of communication between the Soviet border and Kabul, is often halted for days.

The insurgents likewise have become more efficient this year in countering Soviet air power—Moscow's most effective weapon. Using heavy machineguns, the mujahideen have become adept at downing Soviet planes and helicopters. The resistance has capably employed heavy machineguns during attacks on convoys and claims its successes have forced Soviet/regime helicopters to fly at high altitudes, thus reducing their ability

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to support the ground forces. Although there have been isolated reports of surface-to-air missiles in the hands of the resistance, such weapons are still limited. The presence of a few missiles, however, is sufficient to compel Soviet/Afghan pilots to be more cautious.

A disturbing trend has been the increasing use of reprisal attacks in response to mujahidin successes. The level of violence against the civilian population by Soviet firepower has reached new heights. Attacks against Soviet convoys have led to the destruction of nearby villages, cultivated fields and orchards, and the execution of male inhabitants. In July, Soviet forces executed 20-30 elders in the provincial capital of Ghazni in reprisal for the deaths of several Soviet personnel. In October, following a series of hit-and-run attacks on convoys outside Kandahar, reprisals were launched against villages in the area resulting in significant destruction and the deaths of some 100 civilians.

In the Shomali region, the sustained bombing of villages has created virtual free-fire zones along the highway. The vineyards and orchards of what was

once the showcase of Afghan agriculture have suffered irreparable damage from repeated Soviet attacks. In late October during a Soviet/Afghan operation in the Shomali, at least half of the historic town of Istalef was leveled by aerial bombardment and artillery shelling in reprisal for Soviet losses in the area. Civilian casualties totaled several hundred women and children were bayoneted and village elders shot.

Negotiations and Cease-fire

A new tactic adopted this past year has been the attempted negotiation of cease-fires between resistance groups and the Soviets. While many have quickly broken down, one prolonged highly publicized cease-fire was in the Panjshir Valley—which opens onto the vital Salang pass route between Kabul and the Soviet border. The Panjshir truce, arranged between the mujahidin leader Mahsud and the Soviets without the participation of the Karmal government, reveals the strengths and weaknesses of both the Soviets and the resistance.

The Panjshir cease-fire began in March and officially ended in August but the valley remains quiet. Coming after six large-scale and costly Soviet Panjshir Valley campaigns over the 3 years, the truce promised to free Soviet troops for duty elsewhere by reducing the Soviet presence in the valley to token level. At the same time it provided Mahsud an opportunity to consolidate his position and develop a logistical and economic base and harvest a vital food crop. This cease-fire has enabled Mahsud to resupply and train his forces and to expand his organization and operations well beyond the Panjshir Valley. In recent months Mahsud's forces have been conducting operations outside the valley in Kunduz, Paghman and the Shomali region.

Soviet Casualties and POWs

Soviet casualties since December 1977 now total at least 17-20,000 killed and wounded. General dissatisfaction with conditions in Afghanistan have prompted a number of Soviet troops to desert. Accounts of indiscipline, drug

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usage, and black marketing—including the sale of weapons and ammunition—are numerous.

In the early period of the Afghanistan war, there were very few prisoners taken on either side, but now various resistance groups hold Soviet prisoners of war. In 1982 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was able to work out an agreement among the Karmal regime, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, Switzerland, and the Afghan resistance whereby Soviet prisoners of war captured in Afghanistan and held by the resistance would be taken to Switzerland for internment for 2 years. At the end of their internment, the prisoners would be turned over to the ICRC by the Swiss Government for repatriation. In February 1983 the president of the ICRC told the press that the ICRC would not participate in the forced repatriation to the U.S.S.R. of Soviet prisoners interned in Switzerland. In July one of the eight Soviet prisoners interned under this agreement escaped to West Germany where he is seeking political asylum. Another Soviet soldier arrived in Switzerland on October 28.

Two Soviet army privates from Afghanistan arrived in the United States as refugees on November 28. Their resettlement is being assisted by a private voluntary agency.

Popular Support for the Resistance

Popular support for the mujahidin remains high even though the fighting has brought destruction and reprisals on civilians, has disrupted social services and administrations in most of the country, and has contributed to competition for food supplies. Local populations continue to provide the mujahidin with shelter, food, and recruits. Casualties among civilians and the resistance fighters have not reduced mujahidin activities, and morale remains high.

It is impossible to assess the exact number of mujahidin since the numbers fluctuate according to the season and in relationship to the level of Soviet operations in specific areas. Loosely organized in some six main organizations and several smaller groups, the resistance forces operating out of Peshawar are split into two alliances—the moderates and fundamentalists—both calling themselves the "Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahidin." Despite ongoing efforts—mainly by groups in Peshawar—to promote unity, disagreements between groups, including armed attacks upon each other, are not infrequent.

Alliance of the fighting groups operating in Afghanistan to headquarters in Peshawar is often flexible and contingent on a combination of ad-

quate supplies. In the past, only a few of the fundamentalist groups in Peshawar have exercised significant operational control over affiliated units in Afghanistan. However, the major mujahidin offensive in Paktia and Paktika Provinces during September and October was conducted by groups with direct links to Sa'ed Ahmad Gailani, leader of a moderate group in Peshawar.

Tactical cooperation among mujahidin groups inside Afghanistan has increased during this past year. This has been evident in the Shomali region and in attacks conducted inside the capital. Moreover, mujahidin operations in Paktia and Paktika Provinces have been supported by other resistance groups who have interdicted Soviet/regime convoys traveling through the Lower Valley.

While the mujahidin have demonstrated increasing military effectiveness and cooperation this year, the resistance is still plagued by internal divisions and factional fighting. No nationwide resistance organization has yet evolved that is capable of coordinating activities throughout the country, and progress toward organizational and logistical coordination is slowed by serious territorial and ideological rivalries.

Both moderate and fundamentalist alliances have problems of organization. The spring of 1983 witnessed an effort to forestall the fragmentation of the Peshawar-based fundamentalist groups. In May, seven of these groups appointed Professor Abdul Rasool Sayaf, the leader of a minor group, to a 2-year alliance presidency. Despite this mediation, however, internal strains continue within the fundamentalist alliance as some groups sense others of being more interested in expanding their own power bases than in fighting the Soviets.

Supply shortage remains another serious problem for the resistance. Although small arms appear to be available in sufficient numbers, ammunition, medicines, and frequently food are sometimes critically short. Resistance leaders frequently mention to the media and others the need for increased supplies of heavy machineguns and weapons such as mines and rocket grenades for use against armored vehicles. Nonetheless, this year the resistance has registered a higher kill ratio against Soviet aircraft, increased ability to challenge the Soviet policy of urban control, and continued success in operations against Soviet bases and supply lines.

Participation of Iranian-based Afghans in the resistance has also increased in recent months, although the Iranian Government exercises tight control over cross-border activities. The primary beneficiaries of the limited Iranian support have been the Shia groups in Afghanistan.

The most dramatic new development this year, involving an initiative to organize the resistance more effectively as an appeal by ex-King Zahir Shah in June concerning the need to create a united organization capable of speaking on behalf of the Afghan people. The timing of the ex-king's announcement stemmed from growing concerns that representatives of the Afghan people have not been included in the UN-mediated indirect negotiations in Geneva and frustration over inability to create a united resistance organization. Zahir Shah expressed his willingness "to better coordinate our resistance activities and to better represent them in international conferences and activities." At the same time he also stated that he had no personal ambitions and did not want to reestablish the monarchy.

In August, following consultations with the ex-king, the three groups belonging to the moderate alliance announced the establishment of a "United Front for the Liberation of Afghanistan." Its sponsors called on Zahir Shah to "take necessary measures to obtain international recognition of a 12-man committee set up to oversee implementation of the united front. The moderates hope that his involvement will provide a rallying point and give new visibility to the Afghan cause, thus increasing their effectiveness in the international arena.

Provisions were made for the accession of other resistance groups to the united front with the same rights as the founding members, thus leaving the door open to participation by the fundamentalists. Although the latter have to date publicly eschewed involvement in any organization involving the ex-king, Zahir Shah's initiative gains momentum it could eventually receive some fundamentalist support.

Acceleration of the Government's Problems

As the Afghan resistance against Soviet occupation enters its fifth year, the Soviet-sponsored Babrak Karmal regime faces continued widespread popular dissatisfaction. Most observers feel that the regime could not survive without Soviet military support.

Attacks on Soviet and regime officials are common even in areas claimed to be under government control, and Soviet personnel need extremely tight personal security because of the constant threat of kidnapping and assassination. Increased Soviet brutality against civilians has, moreover, undermined the intense Soviet/regime propaganda campaign portraying the Soviets as peacekeepers and Karmal himself as a beloved and democratically chosen leader.

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recognized as being responsible for prisoner interrogation. Amnesty International—which has appealed to Babrak Karmal to stop torture, arbitrary arrest, and secret trials which deny defendants the right of defense—issued a report in early November citing systematic torture of prisoners. Based on interviews with ex-prisoners and their relatives, the Amnesty International report said those tortured include civil servants, teachers, teenage students, and persons arrested as a warning to others—as well as those actually associated with armed resistance to the regime.

The decline in security this year is only one aspect of Afghanistan's grave internal plight. Domestic opposition to the Soviet presence and to the Karmal regime also has accelerated the trend toward economic and administrative chaos which will take years to repair. The country's social and economic infrastructure has been decimated, and in 1983 the Afghan Government approached the International Monetary Fund seeking credits. Social services, agricultural production, and industrial output continue to suffer reverses, and inflation is estimated at around 20%-25%.

In a speech before the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on October 6, Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Mohammad Dost acknowledged the impact of resistance activity on the Afghan economy. He stated that "80 per cent of the country's schools, 14 per cent of our hospitals, 75 per cent of our public transportation vehicles, all communications cables and significant numbers of other public installations have been destroyed." He noted that the damage to the economy totaled \$337 million or roughly half of the total investment during the 20 years before the 1978 revolution.

The continued refugee exodus is another impediment to the functioning of social and educational services, as well as the business sector. Reduction of the work force by the continuing flight of refugees, particularly the middle class, has had a similarly negative impact. Shortages of raw materials and manpower as well as lack of security have forced many industrial units to close. Municipalities operations, moreover, have damaged power facilities and disrupted the flow of petroleum products to urban areas. Most utility projects planned before the Soviet invasion remain uncompleted.

The Afghan economy is increasingly linked with the Soviet Union. In a recent speech at the military academy, Babrak Karmal indicated that the value of trade between the U.S.S.R. and Afghanistan will increase threefold between 1983 and

1987. He noted that more than half of the country's industrial output comes from facilities built with Soviet aid.

Despite other problems, the natural gas industry continues to function more or less normally, due in part to the proximity of the Shoroghan gas fields to the Soviet border. Babrak Karmal claims that revenues from the sale of natural gas amount to 40% of Afghanistan's total exports, but the figure is probably much higher. Afghanistan uses its revenues from gas sales to reduce its debt to the U.S.S.R. and as barter for Soviet machinery and other goods. Afghanistan also exports dried fruit, ruins, and skins and remains a major source of opium; trade in the latter commodity being conducted by Soviet soldiers, as well as by Afghan citizens.

The war's impact on agricultural production varies widely from province to province. Although the Soviet/regime forces have destroyed crops and depopulated many food-producing areas near highways, the country has generally remained self-sufficient in food. Shortages have been experienced mainly in urban areas as a result of swelling urban populations and the interdiction of road transportation by the resistance. Kabul's population now stands at 1.8 million in contrast to 800,000 in 1979; as a result Kabul is increasingly dependent on imported foodstuffs such as wheat, cooking oil, and sugar. Other basic commodities, including medicines, also are generally in very short supply.

The Soviet Union has supplied food and other commodities to meet the basic needs of the cities. In November, for example, the Soviet Union announced agreement to provide Afghanistan with 20,000 tons of wheat immediately and a further 120,000 tons over the next year. According to official press reports from Kabul, half of the wheat would be given as a grant and the other half sold in Kabul in exchange for Afghan goods. This significant increase—115,000 tons of wheat were supplied from the Soviet Union in 1982 and 74,000 tons in 1981—illustrates both increased food shortages and growing reliance on the Soviet Union as a supplier. Although the food supply improved somewhat this year over 1982, a shortfall is again expected during the winter.

Problems in the Military

The Soviets have failed to recruit the Afghan army, comprised of 40-50,000 men, into an effective military force. It is far short of the regime goal and far less than the 90,000 in the Afghan military in 1978. Morale and discipline remain low and the army continues to experience desertions at about the same rate as it gains new conscripts. Many conscripts, in fact, desert and are

reconscripted repeatedly. The desertion rate—up to 30% reported in some units—is higher in the less secure and more contested areas of the country.

As a result of recruiting problems and desertions, reservists during 1983 were once again retained beyond their legal release date. Recent draft laws promulgated in August, in concert with a massive conscription drive, further reduced exemptions from military service and increased the flight of eligible men from the country or into rural areas. These latest changes have led to the recall of men who completed their military service as late as 1980. The regime employs the *talabai*—in which an entire village or section of a city is ordered off and a house-to-house search conducted for conscripts, weapons, or weapons. Following an intensive conscription drive in Kabul during October, Interior Minister Goleboji protested that the drafting of recent reservists would severely disrupt the economy.

In addition to problems of low morale and inadequate training and equipment, the army suffers from lack of a skilled officer corps. Many senior officers were killed following the 1978 coup, and the army has been unable to fill this professional vacuum. As part of the effort to rebuild the Afghan armed forces, military personnel annually numbering in the thousands have been sent to the Soviet Union for training. In addition, Soviet advisers serve at all levels of the Afghan army. The Soviet presence has caused considerable problems. As in previous years, during 1983 there were instances of Afghan troops turning on their Soviet advisers.

The Afghan military, which is dominated by the Khalaj faction, is further weakened by Khalaj-Parcham animosity, with the Khalajis generally taking the view that the Parchamis are sold out to Moscow. The Parchamis in turn suspect the Khalajis of disloyalty and have moved to limit Khalaj authority in the officer corps and the military schools.

Despite such problems, Moscow may still have ambitious long-range regional plans for the Afghan military. In 1982, in an interview published by the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug, Afghan Minister of Defense Abdul Qader asserted that the Afghan army will have a significant future role, similar to that played by the Cuban and Vietnamese armies. Tanjug also quoted a 1981 statement by Babrak Karmal that, "Not far away is the day when our army will become a strong and energetic army capable of defending peace and security not only in Afghanistan, but in the region as well."

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The Refugees

At year's end 2.9 million Afghan refugees were in Pakistan according to official Government of Pakistan figures, while an estimated 650,000 Afghan refugees were in Iran. (About 860,000 Afghans worked in Iran before 1979 bringing the present total of Afghans in Iran to roughly 1.5 million.) Before the Soviet invasion, some 14-17 million persons lived in Afghanistan meaning that between one-fifth and one-fourth of the country's population has now been displaced outside its borders.

Although the refugee exodus has slowed down, it continues steadily, picking up when fighting becomes heavier or when food supplies are particularly scarce. This fall, for example, fighting in Paktia and Paktika Provinces caused a new flight into Pakistan's North Waziristan and Kurram Agencies along the Afghan border. A campaign by the Kabul regime to convince refugees that it is safe for them to return to Afghanistan has been a complete failure. Increasingly harsh Soviet reprisals against civilians suspected of collaborating with the mujahideen will no doubt increase the refugee flow into Pakistan and Iran.

In addition to those persons who have left Afghanistan, an undetermined number have been displaced within the country itself as fighting and destruction have driven people into urban areas. Since the Soviet invasion, the Kabul population, for example, has expanded by an estimated 1.2 million despite the exodus from the city of large numbers of businessmen and other professionals.

Loss of much of the country's educated elite and work force has had a serious negative impact on the Afghan economy. Furthermore, changes in the country's ethnic balance and destruction of the educational and social infrastructure have combined with the loss of educated professionals to create social problems that will endure for many years to come.

The UNHCR has, with the assistance of the Government of Pakistan, undertaken an international relief program for the refugees in Pakistan which includes basic housing and health and educational services. Despite the heavy burden the refugee influx has placed on Pakistan, the refugees have been welcomed and good rapport continues between them and their hosts. Pakistani assistance to the refugees includes some cash allowances to individuals and payment of relief administration costs. Contributions from several other countries and international voluntary agencies have greatly assisted this program.

The Afghan refugees in Iran have not been handled in any systematic way and there have been no international relief efforts there.

Most of the Afghan refugees are Pashtun and, therefore, feel comfortable in the Pashtun-dominated Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). Due to the large concentration of refugees in the Northwest Frontier Province, however, Pakistani authorities began in 1982 to move refugees into new camps in less populated parts of the adjacent non-Pashtun Punjab Province. Efforts to move the refugees increase the possibility of conflicts between the refugees and their hosts. Nonetheless, more than 40,000 Afghans were relocated from the NWFP in order to relieve population pressures and provide better living conditions. Large numbers, however, subsequently left the Punjab to return to Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas citing adverse climatic conditions in the south and a desire to remain close to their homeland.

Pakistani authorities continue seeking ways in which to manage the massive refugee population to the advantage of all concerned. President Zia has reaffirmed his commitment to a political solution including repatriation, and the Government of Pakistan adheres to a ruling by the Organization of the Islamic Conference that no member country should deal with the Karmal regime.

Working through the UNHCR, the World Food Program, and a variety of voluntary agencies, the U.S. Government continues to share in the international assistance program. Since 1980, the United States has contributed more than \$800 million to Afghan refugee relief. During fiscal year 1983, the United States contributed \$20 million to support Afghan refugees in Pakistan, including \$45 million through the WFP. The U.S. contribution represents some 85% of the total UNHCR budget and about 50% of the international food contribution.

Soviet Strategy

The Soviets have failed to reduce the level of the insurgency, but they do not seem to have changed their long-term goals or altered their overall strategy in Afghanistan. Their troop strength remains at approximately 105,000 men. Furthermore, they seem to believe, perhaps erroneously, that in terms of international reaction, the worst is over. While Afghanistan has proved to be a far tougher problem than Moscow originally envisaged, the Soviets seem to judge that the costs are bearable and that in the long run they will be able to wear down the insurgency.

If anything, Moscow's commitment to preserving a pro-Soviet, Marxist-dominated regime in Kabul appears to have grown over the last 4 years as Soviets have come to view Afghans as a test of their credibility. Despite rampant rumors that the regime was evidently unprepared to replace Babrak Karmal, it is probable because no viable alternative exists.

The Soviets appear to be trying to impose a Soviet-style political and economic system. Their efforts, however, have been frustrated by unsettled conditions in the country. Still, where possible, the Soviets have introduced changes aimed to increase central government's control and authority. Afghan Government and party officials are routinely sent to the U.S. for training and indoctrination.

The Afghan economy has been progressively integrated into the East bloc. Afghanistan was an observer at the October 1983 council meeting of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in Havana. Last spring, TASS announced that the U.S.S.R. was the trading partner of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. The Soviet control of Afghanistan's natural gas in the industry, virtually all Afghan gas goes to the U.S.S.R. to service Kabul's Soviet debt. Moscow's current ambassador to Afghanistan was previously the first secretary of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic where he oversaw the development of the West Siberian oil and gas fields.

Since the invasion, 10-20,000 Afghan students have been educated by the U.S.S.R. Moscow considers this gain sufficiently important to exempt the students from military service in Afghanistan. There has been a steady stream of articles in Soviet academic journals and the national press commending Afghanistan with the U.S.S.R.'s Central Asian republics, where final pacification and integration took a similar form.

In their approach to Afghan tribal and nationality problems, the Soviets have taken another page out of their own Central Asian experience as they pursue a policy of divide and rule. The Karmal regime's strategy has been to offer large sums of money, weapons, and privileges as an inducement to tribes and villages to abandon the resistance and to obstruct mujahideen activity. It was the failure of this program—that previously neutral tribal groups joined the resistance instead—that contributed to the government setbacks in Paktia and Paktika. Provis as this year.

In recent months the regime has widely publicized the surrender of mujahideen groups under an official amn program. The resistance, however, discourages potential collaborators from

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aiding the regime by regularly using assassination and other forms of retaliation against government supporters. Mujahideen frequently accept arms and cash subsidies from the government only to return to the resistance after a few months. To date no major sustained defections from the mujahideen to the regime have occurred.

Status of the UN-Sponsored Negotiations

UN efforts to help negotiate a solution to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan date from a November 1980 resolution by the UN General Assembly. The then Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, appointed Peres de Cuellar as his personal representative to see if the United Nations could play an active and useful role in negotiations concerning Afghanistan. When Peres de Cuellar succeeded Waldheim, he followed the same format and appointed Diego Cordovez, UN Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs, to act for him on the problem.

Cordovez shuttle between Kabul and Islamabad in April 1982 and gained agreement for a round of indirect talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan which were held in Geneva that June. Iran decided not to participate formally but agreed to be kept informed and thus associated with the talks.

Following these discussions, the United Nations, Pakistan, and Afghanistan all issued positive statements and indicated that there was a measure of flexibility in the negotiating positions of both sides. Kabul apparently agreed in

principle to allow the subject of troop withdrawal to be part of the negotiating package and to accept the idea that at some point the refugees must be consulted on the conditions of their return. Cordovez announced in a press conference that he kept a written record of the understandings that he has reached and that he would work from these texts in subsequent discussions.

From January 21 to February 7, 1983, Cordovez again visited the area to refine the text of the agreement. His consultations dealt with four items previously identified for consideration: withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan; noninterference and nonintervention; international guarantees of a final settlement; and voluntary return of the refugees.

During Peres de Cuellar's March visit to Moscow, he and Cordovez exchanged views on the Afghanistan situation with both Chairman Andropov and Foreign Minister Gromyko. According to the Secretary General, the Soviet Government expressed itself strongly in favor of a political settlement and supported a continuation of his efforts.

A second round of indirect talks took place in Geneva from April 11 to April 22, 1983. Cordovez met separately with the Pakistan and Afghan Foreign Ministers and with Soviet observers daily to further develop the text of a possible agreement. Once again Cordovez also kept Iran informed of the discussions. At the conclusion of this round, there were suggestions that a breakthrough might be possible.

After consultations with the capitals concerned, another round of indirect talks took place in Geneva from June 12 to 24, 1983. Although the parties made steady progress in defining the nature of a comprehensive settlement—its principles and objectives, the interrelationship among its components, and the provisions for its implementation—the talks stalled on the crucial issue of the Soviets' unwillingness to provide a timetable for troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. Although the parties had agreed that Cordovez should visit the region in September for further discussions, Peres de Cuellar decided in late summer that such a visit at that time would not be productive.

On November 22, the UNGA again passed a resolution urging immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan by a vote of 116 to 20, with 17 abstentions—the largest majority since the Soviet invasion nearly 4 years ago. This was the fifth time since January 1980 that the UNGA had called for a troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, each time by overwhelming margins.

Also during the UNGA, Peres de Cuellar and Cordovez met informally with both the Pakistani and Afghan Foreign Ministers to explore conditions for resuming the diplomatic process. On November 20, the United Nations announced that Cordovez would continue the diplomatic process by further negotiations in Islamabad, Kabul, and Tehran at a mutually convenient date. 88

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